

Message Text

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ACTION STR-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 STRE-00 AID-05
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P R 280820Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1942
INFO USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY PARIS

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ACTION STR PASS ELECTRICALLY

USMTN

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: MTN, ETRD, KS
SUBJECT: NEGOTIATING STRATEGY - REPUBLIC OF KOREA

REF: A) GENEVA 9622; B) SEOUL 5329; C) SEOUL 5266
D) PARIS 19842

1. REFTEL REPORT OF MTN DEL'S HEARTENING BILATERALS WITH ROK
ELOQUENTLY CONFIRMS THE SIGNALS EMBASSY SEOUL HAS BEEN
RECEIVING RE FULL SPEED AHEAD ROKG EFFORTS TO PARTICIPATE
SIGNIFICANTLY IN MTN GIVE AND TAKE. PERHAPS THE BEST
EVIDENCE WE CAN OFFER OF ROKG GOOD INTENTIONS IS THAT WHILE
DURING THE PERIOD JUNE 25 TO JUNE 28 ROKG HAS BEEN ENGAGED
IN WAR GAMES EXERCISES ASSUMING SUDDEN ATTACK FROM NORTH,
SECTION RESPONSIBLE FOR MTN PREPARATIONS HAS BEEN ASSIGNED
ROUND THE CLOCK RESPONSIBILITY FOR PREPARING ROKG RESPONSES
AND OFFERS FOR MTN WITH ABSOLUTE DEADLINE OF JUNE 30, 1978
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IN ORDER TO MEET AMBASSADOR STRAUSS' DESIRE TO CONCLUDE MTN
BY MID-JULY.

2. SIMULTANEOUSLY ROKG UNILATERAL IMPORT LIBERALIZATION
PROGRAM IS BEING PRESSED AND ALREADY HAS INCLUDED LIBERALIZA-
TIONS UNANTICIPATED BY THIS EMBASSY SUCH AS ARMSTRONG CORK
LUXURY FLOORING AND B.F. GOODRICH WALL COVERING. IN RESPONSE TO

USG REQUESTS AND WHICH COMPETE WITH KOREAN PRODUCTS.

3. ROKG MOTIVATION IN RESPONDING TO USMTN OBJECTIVES HAS BEEN DESCRIBED REFTELS (B) AND (C) AS GENUINE INTENT TO AVOID MISTAKES OF JAPAN WHICH ARE FUELING FIRES OF PROTECTIONISM AND/OR ECONOMIC CONFRONTATION IN SUCH FORA AS OECD BY DEVELOPED COUNTRIES AGAINST NIC'S.

4. WHILE RECOGNIZING THAT KOREA, EITHER ON THE EVE OF OR THE MORNING AFTER MTN, WILL HARDLY QUALIFY AS A PARAGON OF FREE TRADE, WE PERCEIVE DEEP ATTACHEMENT ON THE PART OF ROK ECONOMIC LEADERSHIP TOWARD A LIBERAL WORLD TRADING COMMUNITY AT A PACE APPROPRIATE TO THAT OF KOREA'S OVERALL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. TRANSLATED INTO DETAIL, KOREA ANTICIPATES RECIPROCITY FROM THE US FOR WHAT IT SUBJECTIVELY VIEWS AS PAINFUL RESPONSE TO US EXPECTATIONS. KOREA'S MAJOR INDUSTRIAL EGGS ARE LARGELY IN THREE OR FOUR BASKETS INCLUDING TEXTILES, FOOTWEAR AND ELECTRONICS WHICH ARE ENCOUNTERING PROTECTIONISM THROUGHOUT THE WORLD, INCLUDING THE U.S. IN KOREAN MIND FITTING RESPONSE BY USG TO ROKG REQUESTS SHOULD BE TARIFF REDUCTION IN FOREGOING CATEGORIES. HOWEVER, ASSUMING SUCH RESPONSE TO BE POLITICALLY UNFEASIBLE, USG SHOULD BE PREPARED TO MAKE SPECIAL EFFORT TO MEET ROK DESIRE IN OTHER CATEGORIES AS WELL AS OVER THE MEDIUM TERM TO PHASE OUT BILATERAL RESTRAINTS ON KOREAN EXPORTS AS SOON AS POLITICALLY EXPEDIENT.

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